

Message Text

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PAGE 01 GABORO 01165 01 OF 02 261204Z
ACTION AF-10

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MMO-01 OES-07 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00
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FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2081
INFO AMEMBASSY MASERU POUCH
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 1 OF 2 GABORONE 1165

E.O. 11652: N/A
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SUBJECT: FY 80 GORM

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1. SUMMARY: FOLLOWING IS "BRIEF, CANDID" EVALUATION
(REQUESTED PART II REFTTEL) OF GOALS/OBJECTIVES AND RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT OF AID, ICA AND PEACE CORPS, THE THREE USG AGENCIES
REPRESENTED IN BOTSWANA, LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND. THE EVALUATION
(A) RELATES EACH AGENCY'S ACTIVITIES AND PRIORITIES TO MISSION
APPROVED GOALS IN THE THREE COUNTRIES, AND (B) SETS FORTH MY
VIEWS ON THE VALUE OF THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS. THESE POINTS ARE
ASSESSED FOR THE THREE AGENCIES IN THE THREE COUNTRIES. IN
THE CASE OF AID, SUCH A CONSOLIDATED EVALUATION SEEMS
ESPECIALLY JUSTIFIED GIVEN THE REGIONAL STRUCTURE OF AID
DURING THE PEIOD UNDER REVIEW; PC PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT
STAFF ARE COMPARABLE IN THE THREE POSTS; ICA HAS PAOS
ONLY IN GABORONE AND MASERU BUT HAS PROGRAMS AND
SIMILAR OPERATIONS IN ALL THREE. END SUMMARY.

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PAGE 02 GABORO 01165 01 OF 02 261204Z

2. AID. USAID POLICIES AND ACTIVITIES ARE ENCOMPASSED
BY THE TERM "NEW DIRECTIONS". THE PRIORITY TARGET
GROUP IS THE POOR MAJORITY WHO, IN ALL THREE COUNTRIES,
ARE OVERWHELMINGLY RURAL AREAS. FOR A VARIETY OF REASONS AID
PROCEDURES HAVE MADE IT A PONDEROUS ORGANIZATION. PART
OF THE PROBLEM IS THAT CONGRESS, FOR ITS OWN REASONS,
KEEPS AID ON A VERY SHORT LEASH. THE NET EFFECT IS TO

INHIBIT AID'S USEFULNESS IN CONTRIBUTING TO OVERALL US POLICY OBJECTIVES AND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES OF THE BLS COUNTRIES. THE MAJOR PROBLEMS ARE (A) A TENDENCY TO IMPOSE US CONCEPTS AND POLICIES ON COUNTRIES WITHOUT ADEQUATE REGARD FOR LOCAL PRIORITIES, CIRCUMSTANCES AND INITIATIVES. EXAMPLE: PRIORITY NATIONAL CONCERNS IN BOTSWANA AND LESOTHO ARE INSECURITY VIS-A-VIS THEIR NEIGHBORS, SIMULTANEOUS ECONOMIC DEPENDENCE ON THEM AND THE DESTABILIZING EFFECT OF POLITICAL TURMOIL. DEVELOPMENT AND SECURITY CAN BE COMPLIMENTARY. A PROBLEM ARISES BECAUSE BOTSWANA AND LESOTHO BELIEVE SECURITY THREATS AND GREATER MEASURE OF ECONOMIC INDEPENDENCE ARE URGENT PRIORITIES, MAKING DEVELOPMENT SECONDARY. OUT PRESSURES FOR DEVELOPMENT AS WE CONCEIVE IT ARE HEALTHY; BUT IF OUR ASSISTANCE IS TO BE RELEVANT, WE HAVE TO BE SENSITIVE TO COUNTRIES' PRIORITIES RATHER THAN ATTEMPTING TO IMPOSE OUR OWN. (B) A SECOND PROBLEM STEMS FROM RIGIDITY IN IDENTIFYING THE TARGETS FOR US ASSISTANCE. THE "NEW DIRECTIONS" TARGET GROUP (RURAL POOR) HAPPENS TO BE LEAST SUSCEPTIBLE TO ABSORBING USAID. THEY ARE HARD TO REACH FOR LACK OF ACCESS; THEY ARE THE MOST REMOTE FROM US FOR PURPOSES OF COMMUNICATION, AND ARE INSULATED FROM DEVELOPMENT INFLUENCES BY BARRIERS OF LANGUAGE AND HABIT. FINALLY, OUR ADVANCED EXPERTS AND TECHNIQUES PLACE US FARTHER FROM THE RURAL POPULATION OF THE BLS LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 GABORO 01165 01 OF 02 261204Z

COUNTRIES THAN ANY OTHER SECTOR. IN SUMMARY, ONE OF OUR OVERALL POLICY OBJECTIVES IS TO REDUCE DESTABILIZING EFFECT OF POVERTY. YET BECAUSE OF DIFFICULTIES IN REACHING THE RURAL POOR AND POLICY INHIBITIONS IN AIDING THE URGAN POOR, WE RISK DOING NOTHING AT ALL TO COMBAT POVERTY. A FINAL POINT: THE SIZE OF PROJECTS (AND OF PAPERWORK DEMANDS) SHOULD BE TAILORED TO FIT LOCAL CIRCUMSTANCES AND MANPOWER CAPABILITIES. A CURRENT EXAMPLE: IN THEORY, MIDDLE-SIZED (AID) PROJECTS (LESS THAN \$500,000) ARE TO OPERATE UNDER ACCELERATED PROCEDURES; IN PRACTICE, AS MUCH PAPERWORK IS REQUIRED FOR AN AIP PROJECT AS FOR ANY OTHER, SO THE TENDENCY IS TO AVOID THEM. CONCLUSION: (A) USAID DOES NOT (IN MY OPIONION) CONTRIBUTE TO THE ACHIEVEMENT OF US-APPROVED POLICY OBJECTIVES TO THE EXTENT THAT AVAILABLE RESOURCES (PROGRAM AND STAFF) WOULD PERMIT UNDER DIFFERENT GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES; (B) AID POLICIES AND PROCEDURES PREVENT IT FROM HAVING THE IMPACT THAT WOULD STRENGTHEN AND STABILIZE THE BLS GOVERNMENTS MORE DIRECTLY; (C) WE ARE OFTEN REDUCED TO INACTION BY PROBLEMS OF ADAPTING TO THE SCALE OF THE ECONOMIES, TECHNOLOGIES

AND NEEDS OF THE PEOPLE OF THE THREE BLS COUNTRIES.

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PAGE 01 GABORO 01165 02 OF 02 261158Z
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE SECTION 2 OF 2 GABORONE 1165

3. ICA. THE STATED GOALS OF ICA, (BUILDING UNDER-
STANDING OF US FOREIGN POLICY AND THE NATURE AND
ACHIEVEMENTS OF AMERICAN SOCIETY) ARE BROAD ENOUGH
TO BE ADAPTABLE TO OVERALL US GOALS AND OBJECTIVES
IN THE BLS COUNTRIES. ICA PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES
ARE STILL AT A BASIC, BEGINNING LEVEL IN ALL THREE
COUNTRIES. THE TOTAL AMERICAN STAFF IN THE THREE
COUNTRIES CONSISTS OF TWO PAOS (THERE IS NO PAO IN
MBABANE). THE PAO FOR BOTSWANA ARRIVED ONLY SIXTEEN
MONTHS AGO. THIS STAFFING IS INADEQUATE, PARTICULARLY AS ICA
ACTIVITIES ARE GRADUALLY BEING BROUGHT TO SUPPORT
COUNTRY OBJECTIVES. ACTIVITIES IN PROMOTING UNDER-
STANDING OF US FOREIGN POLICY AND SOCIETY, AND THEIR
RELATION TO OVERALL POLICY GOALS ARE (A) CIRCULATION
OF WIRELESS FILE MATERIAL AND POLICY GUIDANCE TO
RANKING OFFICIALS AND OPINION LEADERS; THIS ACTIVITY
HELPS TO FILL A VIRTUAL INFORMATION VOID. REGRETTABLY
WIRELESS FILE RECEPTION HAS BEEN ALMOST USELESS IN TWO
OF THE POSTS. WHILE THERE ARE LOCAL NEWSPAPERS, THEY
MAKE LITTLE PRETENSE OF COVERING FOREIGN AFFAIRS. THE
PRINCIPAL SOURCE OF INTERNATIONAL WRITTEN NEWS IS THE
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PAGE 02 GABORO 01165 02 OF 02 261158Z

HIGHLY-BIASED SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO AND PRESS. ICA-ORIGIN MATERIALS ARE THUS OFTEN THE SOLE SOURCE OF RELIABLE INFORMATION ON US POLICY. THIS US INPUT HELPS MEET A BASIC POLICY GOAL, I.E., DEVELOPING AWARENESS OF US PRESENCE, POLICIES AND INTERESTS IN THE COUNTRIES. THIS IS EXCEPTIONALLY IMPORTANT IN PSYCHOLOGICAL TERMS GIVEN THE RELATIVE ISOLATION AND REMOTENESS OF BLS COUNTRIES FROM WORLD NEWS CENTERS. DISPLAYS, BOOKS AND ESPECIALLY MAGAZINES ALSO PROVIDE INSIGHTS INTO AMERICAN SOCIETY, CULTURE AND DAILY LIFE;

(B) FREQUENT AND REGULAR FILM SHOWINGS: FILMS HAVE OUTREACH BEYOND THE LITERATE URBAN DWELLERS AND OFFICIALS. THE EDUCATIONAL INFLUENCE OF SCHOOL FILM SHOWINGS IS ALREADY GREAT--AND HAS GREATER POTENTIAL IN REACHING THE RURAL MAJORITY. THIS IS A PROGRAM OF LONG-RANGE EDUCATION, RECOGNIZED AS SUCH BY THE USSR AND PRC. OUR POLICY GOALS OF COUNTERING INSTABILITY AND RADICALIZATION REQUIRE A STEPPED-UP FILM EFFORT IN ALL THREE COUNTRIES;

(C) VISITS OF ENTERTAINERS, ARTISTS AND LECTURERS: THESE PROVIDE A FORM OF DIRECT CONTACT THAT EXPANDS THE FACT OF US PRESENCE AND INTEREST IN HUMAN TERMS, THEREBY ENHANCING POPULAR AWARENESS, UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR THE US. LIBRARIES IN ALL THREE COUNTRIES PROVIDE THE LOCUS FOR A PUBLIC, VISIBLE PRESENCE REPRESENTATIVE OF AMERICAN CHARACTER AND OUR INTEREST AND CONCERN FOR OTHERS.

CHANGES IN US POLICY TOWARD AFRICA DURING THE PAST FIFTEEN MONTHS HAVE GIVEN US UNPRECEDENTED NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR ACCESS TO OFFICIALS, OPINION-MOLDERS, STUDENTS AND THE GENERAL POPULATION. WE ARE NOT TAKING ADVANTAGE OF THESE OPPORTUNITIES FOR LACK OF RESOURCES.

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PAGE 03 GABORO 01165 02 OF 02 261158Z

4. PEACE CORPS. A WIDE RANGE OF OVERALL MISSION OBJECTIVES IS SERVED BY PEACE CORPS COLUNTEERS (PCVS). BLS GOVERNMENTS LACK TRAINED MANPOWER, IT IS A WEAKNESS THAT EXPOSES THEM TO DESTABILIZING (I.E, EXTERNAL) INFLUENCES, ACCUSATIONS OF GOVERNMENT FAILURE TO MEET GROWING DEMANDS, ETC. IN RESPONDING TO BLS REQUESTS IN VARIOUS CRITICAL SECTORS, PCVS STRENGTHEN THE GOVERNMENTS CONCERNED. THERE IS AN OPTIMUM NUMBER OF PCVS FOR ANY COUNTRY DEPENDING UPON POLITICAL CONDITIONS, PSYCHOLOGICAL ATTITUDES, ETC. WE BELIEVE THOSE LIMITS HAVE BEEN REACHED IN LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND BECAUSE THE TWO ARE RELATIVELY UNSTABLE INTERNALLY; EASILY-AVAILABLE PCVS CONTINUE TO BE USED AS A CRUTCH

ENABLING GOVERNMENTS TO POSTPONE DIFFICULT DECISIONS
ABOUT MEETING TRAINED MANPOWER NEEDS. TO EXCEED
OPTIMUM NUMBERS OF PCVS FOR PROLONGED PERIODS HAS THE EFFECT
OF WEAKENING RATHER THAN STRENGTHENING AND STABILIZING
THESE GOVERNMENTS, AND RISKS ADVERSE LONG-TERM EFFECTS
ON POLICIES OF MODERATION AND SELF-RELIANCE.
NORLAND

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